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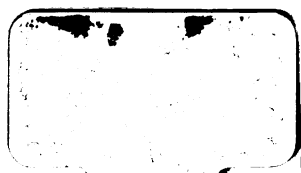
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AN  
A T T E M P T

TO PROVE THAT  
THE OPINION CONCERNING  
THE  
DEVIL, OR SATAN,

AS A  
FALLEN ANGEL,  
AND  
THAT HE TEMPTS MEN TO SIN,

HATH  
NO REAL FOUNDATION IN SCRIPTURE.

BEING A  
SUPPLEMENT to a PAMPHLET

PUBLISHED ABOUT THE YEAR 1770,

ENTITLED,  
AN ENQUIRY  
INTO THE SCRIPTURE MEANING OF THE WORD  
SATAN.

*The SECOND EDITION, with considerable Additions.*

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By WM. ASHDOWNE.

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*Time, that destroys the fictions of error and opinion, confirms the demonstrations of nature, and of truth.*

CICERO of the nature of the Gods.

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A N

## ATTEMPT, &c.

### SECT I.

*An Examination of the Passages in the Old Testament, in which the Words DEVILS and SATAN occur, and what is related of him.*

THE first text in which the former word is mentioned is, Liv. xvii. 7. And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto Devils, after whom they have gone a whoring.—That by Devils is meant, the idols or objects of idolatry only, is plain, from Deut. xxxii. 16, 17. They (the Israelites) provoked God to jealousy with their strange gods; they sacrificed unto Devils,\* not to God; to gods whom they knew not; to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.

Of Jeroboam, it is related, 2 Chron. xi. 15. That he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the Devils, and for the calves which he had made.—They sacrificed to the calves, 1 Kings, xii. 31, 32. He made other gods and molten images to provoke God to anger. xiv. 9.

In Psal. cvi. 35. 38, it is related of the people of Israel, when they were mingled with the Heathen,

\* Dr. Taylor, in his Hebrew Concordance, saith, “ It signifies hairy, or a goat, so called from its shaggy hair. The deities worshipped, in Egypt, such as oxen, dogs, wolves, monkeys, goats.” It may just be observed, that the word Devil doth not once occur in the Old Testament.

B

and



and learned their works, That they served their idols, which was a snare unto them; yea, they sacrificed their sons and their Daughters unto Devils, i. e. to the idols of Canaan. Of the Heathen, the Apostle saith, The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to Devils; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with Devils. 1 Cor. x. 20. viii. 7. 10. Deut. xii. 30, 31. Rev. ix. 20.

The first text in which the word Satan occurs, in our translation, is, 1 Chron. xxi. 1. And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked (or moved David, as the same original word is rendered in the next verse) to number Israel; or, as it is worded, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.\*

Whenever the people were numbered, from twenty years old and upwards, each one, whether rich or poor, is commanded to pay half a shekel, Exod. xxx. 11, &c. This was to be applied to the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for their souls. But there is not even the least hint in either of the fore-cited chapters, that David intended, or gave any order to Joab to collect the half shekel of the people that were numbered. And it is plain, that Joab, his chief General, looked upon the King's command as abominable; and said to him

\* Mr. Farmer observes, in his Answer to Dr. Worthington, p. 53, That the authors of the Septuagint did not imagine there was any reference to Satan in 1 Chron. xxi. 1. which they render *και ανεγη διαβολος* (not *Diabolos εν τω ισραηλ*, and there arose an enemy in Israel. Even in reference to a good angel, the Hebrew word is translated *διαβολη*, by the Septuagint, Numb. xxii. 32. which therefore must denote opposition without malice. In reference to the same angel, the Septuagint uses the verb from which *διαβολος* is derived.

Why,

Why doth my Lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespasss to Israel? And when he and the inferior officers had executed the King's command, at least in part, and returned to him with the list of the men, it appears plain he very soon recollected he had trespassed by not observing the command of God, in Exodus. 1 Chron. xxi. 8. In his confession, mentioned in this chapter, it doth not in the least appear, he perceived in himself that he was tempted by Satan to commit the sin, or that he was moved to it by God; and indeed, as God charged him with the sin, or transgression, we cannot suffer ourselves to admit he was either the sole or partial cause of it.\* From David's opposing Joab's judgment and remonstrance against numbering the people, it is evident he was determined upon it from whatever cause it arose.

Farther, it appears from Samuel, just cited, that previous to this, Israel, or the people had sinned, and it provoked God; for, it is said, Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. What their former sin was, is not mentioned; but for that, as well as for their present transgression, God punished the people; as is related, 2 Sam. xxiv. 11, &c. David again confessed, that as he alone had sinned, he and his family only deserved to be punished.

\* Though the original word translated "moved," doth in most texts where it occurs, properly signify stirred up, persuaded, or enticed by the influence which one person hath over or upon another, to engage him to act conformable thereto, as appears in these texts, Deut. xiii. 6, 7. Joshua xv. 18. 1 Kings xxi. 25. 2 Chron. xviii. 2. yet it cannot well be admitted in the case under consideration, for as the Apostle James saith, As God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempted he any man. i. e. by any real influence on his mind to excite him to do that which is evil.

B 2

Finally,

Finally, I observe, that in the sacred writings extant, prior to the writing the book of Chronicles, there is not the least mention of any angel being cast out of Heaven on account of his having sinned against God, as the common opinion of such an apostate spirit; and therefore the writer of it, by the word Satan, could not intend such a being. Indeed, had any of those writers made mention of such a being, and that he had tempted or provoked any of the people to sin by his secret wiles or suggestions, there would then be some plausible ground to suppose that Satan provoked David to number the people: but it is certain they have not, even in a single instance. The Satan, or adversary, that excited him to undertake it, probably was his pride, or some other inordinate or criminal desire; or perhaps, the fear of a formidable enemy. One or other of these, it is probable, led him to overrule the better judgment and exhortation of Joab, who was entirely against it. That it was his act only, is plain, from his own words. 1 Chron. xxi. 8. 17.

The next text where the word Satan occurs, is in Job. i. 8. and ii. 1. 2. That a fallen angel, or a wicked apostate spirit is not meant, appears to me, at least highly probable, from the following considerations: One is, it is very incredible that the Lord should hold the conversation there related, with such a being, and also that he should give him leave to afflict his pious servant with the sore disorder of the boils merely to gratify the groundless and invidious insinuation or charge of such a wicked spirit; that his serving God was not from a pious and good principle, but because he had blessed him with an abundance; but, that if he endangered his life, he would rebel against him. In either view of this relation, it certainly is without any precedent in all the Bible; and, I own, I cannot reconcile the latter

latter part with the many declarations in those very writings in which is expressed God's regard to those that serve him, in like manner as is related of Job's piety to God; his paternal regard for his children's religious welfare and happiness; and his acts of beneficence manifested to the necessitous, related in chap. xxix.

That neither Job, nor his wife believed the boils were inflicted by Satan, as a wicked spirit, but by the hand of God, is plain, from chap. ii. 9, 10. and from chap. i. 21. it is equally plain he believed that his other afflictions came upon him from God; and from the speeches of his friends, it is alike evident that they understood all his afflictions came upon him by the appointment of God; and after the Lord had blessed him with a double portion of goods, as chap. xlii. 10, 11. it is said, Then came there unto him, all his brethren and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and they bemoaned over him *all the evils that the Lord had brought upon him*; and, according to the custom of that time, and what is similar with it at present in the Eastern countries, every man also gave him a piece of money, and, every one an earring of gold.

Lastly, I observe in all that is related of Satan, respecting Job, there is not the least intimation of his infusing into his mind evil thoughts, or exciting in him any inordinate desires, by which he tempted him to sin against the Lord, either prior to, or after he was afflicted with the boils.

The next text in which the word Satan is mentioned is, Zach. iii. 1, &c. The first six chapters appear to contain a revelation by a vision made to the prophet concerning the Israelites, upon their return from the Babylonian captivity, and their building the Temple; and the principal persons that are mentioned are Joshua and Zerubbabel.

This

This appears highly probable by consulting the time when the prophet lived and prophesied, and comparing what he says in the context, we are considering with what is related. Ezra v. Then the prophets Haggai, and Zachariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judea and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem, and with them were the prophets of God helping them: i. e. by their prophesying. Their adversaries are thus described: At that time came to them Tatnai, Governor on this side the river; and Shether-boznai, and their companions, and said thus to them: Who hath commanded you to build the house and make the walls? Then said we unto them, after this manner; What are the names of the men that make this building? In short, they would have made them desist from building, and wrote to Darius for that purpose; but it stands recorded thus: The eyes of the Lord were upon the elders of the Jews, so that they, (their adversaries, or Satan) could not cause them to cease till the affair came before Darius, who made a decree, that they should not only suffer the building to go on, but also assist the builders with such things as might be needful.

Another text in which the word Satan occurs, is, Psal. cix. 6. Set thou a wicked man over him, (i. e. mine enemy) and let Satan stand at his right hand.\* It is exceeding plain that in the context David is speaking of men who were his enemies, he saith,

\* On this verse Dr. Patrick comments, Let the worst man that can be found be appointed to bear his cause when he is accused, and his most malicious adversary plead against him.

For

For my love, they are my adversaries. But the Hebrew word rendered adversaries, and also in the verses 20, 29, is the same as in verse 6, translated Satan.\* Had the word in the former verses been translated as in the latter, it would be, They are my Satans. But, I judge, there is no discerning man who can believe that the persons he had mentioned as the wicked, who encompassed him about with words of hatred, and fought against him, were fallen angels, but men only.

Besides the foregoing texts where the words Devils and Satan occur, there are others wherein mention is made of an evil spirit, that, by some persons, may be interpreted and understood to intend a fallen angel, and therefore be urged against what I have asserted respecting the entire silence of those writings concerning such a being. These texts will be considered, and the first I will produce is, 1 Kings, xxii. 21, 22, 23.† The occasion of the Prophet's mentioning the vision, is related in the foregoing verses, which need not be cited. The vision will be easily discerned, and also allowed to be not a relation of a fact, which then took place, but only a representation made to the Prophet relative to Ahab and Jehoshaphat's going to besiege Ramoth Gilead. Farther, it appears to me highly improbable, at least, that the Prophet believed, the spirit said, to come forth, or out from among the good angels, who are represented as standing be-

\* See Taylor's Hebrew Concordance, No. 1928.

† And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him, i. e. Ahab. And the Lord said, wherewith? And he said I will go forth and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets; and he said, thou shalt persuade and prevail also, go forth and do so. Now therefore behold the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.

fore

fore the throne of God, was intended to represent a fallen angel, or apostate spirit; and, I think it will appear in that light to every one who attends to the passage. I judge it will also be granted to have been equally improbable to the Prophet, that God should send such a being to execute the message there related. That which, in my opinion, is an unanswerably strong and decided proof of the justness of the foregoing observations, respecting the Prophet's opinion of the evil spirit not being a fallen angel, is the entire silence of the Scriptures, that such a being had been cast out of Heaven, as I have already observed; and it is past doubt, that in the vision there is not the least hint that the evil spirit was a representation of one of them.

If it is admitted the vision was subsequent to what is related of the 400 prophets who prophesied to Ahab and Jehoshaphat, that success would attend their besieging Ramoth Gilead, it is plain, that the former was already persuaded of the truth of their prediction, particularly by what is said of Zedekiah and the other prophets, v. 11, 12. But supposing it should be granted that the evil spirit who came forth and offered to go and persuade Ahab represents a fallen angel, yet it will not prove there is more than one.

I may still add, that whoever will be at the pains to look at the numerous texts in the Old Testament, particularly in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, wherein mention is made of the false prophets, will not find the least hint that they were stirred up, or excited to prophesy falsely; and thereby deceive the people, by an evil spirit, i. e. a fallen angel. But those writings have assigned very different and apparent causes, from whence they were induced or excited to deceive the people by their prophesying false things, as the prophets did we have mentioned.

On

On the whole, there doth not seem to be the least proof that the evil spirit, mentioned in the vision, was designed to represent a fallen angel ; or was so understood by the prophet to whom it appeared.

Another text I shall take under consideration, is, 1 Sam. xvi. 14,\* &c. Previous to my offering any observations upon it, I judge it will be proper to attend to what is related in chapter the tenth, wherein mention is made of God's sending Samuel to choose Saul, and anoint him to be King over his people. To whom Samuel said, The spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy, and thou shalt be turned into another man : And after he had turned back from him, God gave him another heart ; and when he and his companions came to the hill, a company of the prophets met him, and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. Some time after this, God, by Samuel, sent him to go up against Amalick, and utterly destroyed it ; as it is related chapter xi. but, instead of his fully executing this commission, he spared Agag, &c. as v. 8, 9. Upon this, Samuel came to him, and, among other things, plainly told him, as v. 22, 23, that, for this act of perverse disobedience, God rejected him from being King. Soon after this, Samuel was sent to anoint David, the son of Jesse, to be King in his stead, which he accordingly did ; tho' the commencement of his reign did not take place till the death of Saul. I think there can hardly be any doubt that Saul was informed of David's being anointed King.

Let any one, for à moment, only consider these particular cases, which, it is natural to believe, very deeply affected the mind of Saul : It was im-

\* The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit, from the Lord, troubled him.



bittered with the just accusation of his own inexcusable guilt ; or, in the words of Samuel to him : Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry ; thou hast rejected the word of the Lord in not executing it on the Amaelkites. That God, who had raised him up in a very singular manner to be the first King over his people Israel ; that he had withdrawn his spirit from him by which he had prophesied among the prophets ; and, finally, he had, by a special direction to Samuel, anointed David to be King ; and to him he had given his spirit. A proper attention to these very interesting particulars, will, I presume, without any difficulty, explain in what sense we are to understand that an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him ; and also the true cause from whence his servants, who, no doubt, saw his unusual dejection of mind, said to him, Behold ! now, an evil spirit, from God, troubleth thee. To remove, or mitigate which, they gave him this advice : Let our Lord the King command thy servants to seek out a man who is a cunning player on a harp, and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit, from God, is upon thee, that he will play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. To which proposal he assented ; and David was sent for ; and when the evil spirit, from God, was upon Saul, he took an harp and played with his hand : So Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.—The success attending the advice of his servants, shews plainly what was their opinion of the real cause, as well as the nature of his trouble.

I presume it will be allowed there is not the least evidence in the context from whence we may justly suppose, that Saul's servants believed the power of the musical harp could possibly expel a fallen angel from Saul, had they understood it to be such a being

being. But it was not an improper expedient to relieve his mind, under its present disordered state; especially if we may suppose that he was rather fond of that kind of music.

Men, in common, and even very sensible men too, through the force of habit, are very apt to affix to the words evil spirit, they find in Scripture, the idea of a fallen angel; and then incautiously conclude that those writers used them in the same sense; but this is often, as in the case before us, a very capital error, as, I presume, will appear more fully in the following pages.

There is another text in Judges chapter ix. 23. where it is said, God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem. After the death of Gideon, the father of Abimelech, he applied to the men of Shechem to obtain their consent, that, as one of his sons, he might rule over them in his stead; but that he might not have any competitor in the family of Jerubbaal his brother, who had sixty sons, he obtained money out of the house of Baal-berith, with which he hired vain and light persons, and by these he slew them all, except Jotham, the youngest, who escaped from that unnatural and unprovoked massacre. Upon this, the Shechemites made him King. As they in general were not concerned in that wicked act, Jotham addressed them to retaliate it upon Abimelech and those who were concerned with him; as v. 7—20. After Abimelech had reigned three years, it is said God sent an evil spirit, &c. I think it is probable that the Shechemites, who were not concerned with him, in consequence of Jotham's expostulation, meditated revenge against him and his adherents, and therefore commenced hostilities against him; upon which Abimelech, with his forces, went against Shechem, and slew many of the people; after which he attacked

Thebez, and took it; but, upon his attempt upon the tower, he was slain. Upon his death, it is said, verses 56, 57, Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his brethren; and for all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads, and upon them came the curses of Jotham, the son of Jerubbaal.

From this relation, it appears plain, to me, that by an evil spirit is not to be understood a fallen angel; but, that God, in the course of his Providence, raised, or stirred up an enemy to Abimelech and his adherents: as, verses 56, 57. to punish them for the wicked act of slaying the sons of Jerubbaal his brother, who had rendered signal services to his people against their enemies in the time of Gideon their father.

Another text is in Psalms lviii. 49, where, it is said, God cast upon them (the Egyptians) the fierceness of his wrath and indignation, by sending evil angels. I would just observe that the Hebrew word here rendered angels, is often and justly translated Messengers, and sometimes Prophets, who, from God, delivered his messages to his people; and therefore the word Angels, doth, by no means, always intend angels as invisible spirits, much less fallen angels. This can be determined only by the context, or parallel passages. Now, it is indisputably, plain, in the context, the writer gives a summary account of God's dealings with the Egyptians, as is particularly recorded in Exod. vii. to the xiii. But, it is certain, that Moses hath not mentioned evil angels being sent among the Egyptians. The only angels, or messengers he hath related whom God sent among them, were himself and Aaron, by whose instrumentality God cast upon them the fierceness of his wrath, &c. and in this sense, to the Egyptians they were evil angels,  
or

or messengers. Now, I think, it will be granted, that the Psalmist could not derive any knowledge of evil angels, i. e. apostate spirits, being sent among the people of Egypt, but from the History of Moses, in which there is not even any hint of such beings sent among them.

I here beg leave to observe, that whatever real knowledge men have of angels, i. e. their intellectual powers, or their visible communications with men, or their being the agents of God in his providential government in this world, that it is wholly derived from divine revelation, without which it is absolutely impossible they can have the least knowledge of either; and the reason is as obvious as it is unquestionably true, viz. because they are the inhabitants of the invisible world. And this is equally true, as it respects any of those beings having sinned against God, and on that account expelled from Heaven. But, even supposing that was clearly revealed, yet that would be no proof of their tempting men to sin, by suggesting to their minds evil thoughts, or raising in them corrupt desires, terminating in sinful actions. A real knowledge of these things must depend upon revelation, or a relation of real facts in proof of it. But of these things the Old Testament is entirely silent, as we have seen.\*

Thus much concerning what we find in the Old Testament.

\* Mr. Farmer's opinion is this,—That the Old Testament contains no account of the fall of angels, much less does it represent them as scaling Heaven, and being thrown down from thence. There is not even the most distant reference, or allusion to such an event in any of the Jewish prophets. Farther, he saith, I am far from taking upon me to say there was not an early revelation of the rebellion of angels, and their expulsion from Heaven. But hitherto this point has been asserted only,—not proved.

SECT

## S E C T II.

*I will now examine the New Testament to see whether any thing occurs therein to corroborate the commonly received opinion of Fallen Angels; or Satan and the Devil.*

THE only texts, or at least the principal ones, are, in 1 Pet. ii. 4. and Jude v. 6. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgement. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitations, he hath reserved in everlasting chains of darkness unto the judgement of the great day.

On these words I observe, first, That none of the Apostles could derive the least knowledge from the Old Testament, that any of the angels had been cast out of Heaven on account of their having sinned against God ; and we have no account that Jesus made any discovery of it to them.

Secondly, Had Peter, or Jude, known, from the Old Testament, or from Jesus, that there were *fallen angels*, it is natural to suppose they would have been explicit in mentioning them to the persons they wrote to, otherwise they could not have understood what beings they intended ; and that for reasons already offered.

Thirdly, Neither of the particulars just mentioned, can be satisfactorily inferred from the word Angels. The primary import of the original word is, to relate any matter, particularly as a messenger,

ger, and in this sense, the same original word is rendered, James ii. 25. These messengers were sent to spy the interior parts of the land of Canaan; and, upon their return, they related to Moses and to the people what they had seen and heard in traversing it. And there is but one text where the original word can in the least be supposed to allude to fallen angels, and that is Matt. xxv. 41.

Fourthly, That the word *ταρταρων*, translated cast down to Hell, is the only place in the New Testament where it is translated cast down to Hell.

Fifthly, All that the two Apostles have related of the conduct of the angels, is, that they sinned, and kept not their first estate, or principality, but left (not were cast out of) their own habitation; where that was is not mentioned.

Of the punishment, it is said they were cast down to Hell, and delivered into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment of the great day. But there is not the least mention what their sinful conduct was, nor that they were cast out of Heaven and separated from the good angels.

Let us now see whether the context in Peter favors the commonly received opinion or not.

In the foregoing chapters he saith to his brethren, that he and the apostles who were with the Lord on the Mount, Matt. xvii. 1, &c. heard a voice from Heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. He then adds, That we have a more sure word of prophecy, i. e. a more particular and full revelation in the Old Testament concerning Jesus as the Son of God, which ye will do well to give heed to, because those writings were indited by the Holy Ghost; and the meaning of those parts of them, respecting Jesus, are not confined to the prophets, or that people; but we also

also are included therein : And then he tells them, that in the time of those prophets, there were false ones among that people ; and there are, or will arise, false teachers among you, who will propagate false doctrines, even denying the Lord that bought them, and draw away many after them, and thereby bring upon themselves swift destruction. And he describes the way or manner by which they will attempt to draw them away. And from v. 10—19, I think he represents their principle and conduct ; and against such false prophets Jesus warned his disciples, Matt. vii. 15. 26. 29. xxiv. 11. Mark xiii. 21, 22, 23. See Acts xx. 30. And I apprehend the Apostle St. John alluded to such persons. 1 Ephes. iv. 1, 2, 3, calling them Anti-Christ, i. e. opposers or enemies of Christ.

In the chapter under consideration, the Apostle warns the Christians to be aware of them that they might not fall under the same condemnation which would overtake those false teachers. And in verse 4, he mentions others, whom he calls angels, or messengers that sinned, &c.

The opinion of a very sensible anonymous author\* on this subject, appears to me at least very probable, that the angels, i. e. the messengers that sinned, are those men related Numb. xiii. xiv. who were sent to spy out the land of Canaan, whose report to Moses, &c. of the numbers and situation of some of its inhabitants, and the strength of their cities, discouraged the people from going up to take possession of it. These were rulers and heads of the people whom God punished for giving such an account, by inflicting on them a great plague, so that they and all the people whom they caused to murmur against God, and Moses his servant, died.

\* An Enquiry into the Scripture meaning of the word Satan.  
Heb.

Heb. iii. 7. 19. Both the messengers and the people had seen the mighty power of God exerted in their deliverances and yet they did not believe, but rebelled. Those messengers who sinned, were plain and pertinent examples of men like themselves, from whom they might and ought to take warning not to be seduced by the false teachers, and thereby be guilty of a like unbelief, i. e. in Jesus their Lord, and a wicked departure from his commands, which, from conviction they had embraced, and on that account, fall under an heavier condemnation and judgment from God, than he had inflicted on those messengers and the people seduced by them. But, I apprehend, that if we understand the passage we are commenting upon, of fallen angels, it was neither applicable, nor indeed intelligible to the apostles, or the people to whom he was writing, since they had no knowledge that any of the angels had sinned, or wherein it consisted; and, I may add, if they had, what was the conduct of angels, (properly such) to them?

The other instances are clearly taken from men like themselves; the probability therefore is, that these were of the same nature with those, who, in the time of Noah, God drowned by a deluge; and then he introduces the similar conduct of the inhabitants of Sodom, &c. whom God destroyed by fire. But, as a contrast to these, he mentions the cases of Noah and Lot, who believed in God, and obeyed his word, and were saved from those judgments. These, and the former persons, were obvious examples of men of the like passions with themselves, which they could not only easily understand, but also easily apply the former as warnings, and the latter as encouragements to fortify their minds against those false teachers; but, I apprehend, they could not, as it respected fallen angels,

D

What



What force these observations will be admitted to have, as proofs, that by the word Angels that sinned, &c. the Apostle did not intend fallen angels, but the rulers and heads of the people, mentioned above, is submitted to the deliberate and unbiassed judgment of the reader.

In the preceding quotations from the Old Testament, where the words Devils and Satan, &c. occur, it appears to me, there is not any proof that the writers in using them, meant fallen angels; and therefore they do not give the least account that Satan, in a secret or unperceived manner, infused, or put into the mind or heart of any one man, evil thoughts, or excited in him inordinate desires, by which he tempted him to sin. Likewise, in the New Testament it appears, that there is not any explicit relation that any of the angels were expelled Heaven for their having sinned against God.

It will therefore follow, that in the former writings in which it is recorded of individuals, or of the people in general who sinned against God by violating the obligations of natural or revealed religion, or both; they have not, even in a single instance, attributed to the temptation of Satan. In this they are as entirely silent as they are respecting any man's being possessed by one of them, or by a demon; and yet had Satan been the real agent, or instrument in tempting men to sin in like manner; or, as universally as it is now believed he doth, I think it will be allowed to be natural to expect the writers of the Old Testament would have given some plain account of it, in some instances; for it is certain they repeatedly mention many different causes or occasions from whence men were tempted to sin; but, it is certain, they have not attributed it to Satan in a single instance. From those writings therefore it seems to be indisputably certain,  
that

that neither the Apostles nor the Jews could derive the least information concerning Satan or his devices ; or, that any person, much less men in general, had been tempted by him to sin.

Should it be said, that the relation given of the Serpent's tempting Eve, and seducing her to sin, is a proof that an individual at least, is an exception ; I answer, that, admitting it was by a fallen angel who assumed the bodily shape of that creature, or entered into one, (of which however there is not the least mention in the Bible) yet the relation of his tempting her was, by conversing with her, and not by his infusing in an invisible or unperceived manner into her mind or heart, evil thoughts, or raising evil desires in her, as is now believed to be the way or manner by which he tempts men to sin ; consequently the former essentially differs from the latter. And, I suppose there is not any man who will plead that Satan tempts men after that manner. Her being tempted, as is related, I should therefore apprehend cannot justly be urged as a real or satisfactory proof of Satan's tempting men to sin. In what conspicuous light must the difference appear between the sacred writings and those of other men in the present and past ages who lived under the light of the Christian religion, which are replete with *assertions* that a fallen angel assumed the shape of a real serpent, or entered into one ; and that he tempted her and her posterity to the commission of the sins which they have been guilty of, or at least, to the principal part of them.

But was the commonly received opinion that it was a fallen angel entered into the serpent, proved to be justly founded in the plain language of Scripture, which it certainly is not, yet that could not prove there is more than one as a tempter of men to sin ? And, I may justly remark, there is not even

a single text in the New Testament where the word *Devils* is to be found. The only one from whence it may seem to be inferred is, Matt. xxv. 41. where Jesus spoke of the Devil and his angels. For, in every other text where the word *Devils* occurs, it is *Daimonia*, and not *Diabolos*. The only text where the last word hath a plural meaning is, 1 Tim. iii. 11. 2 Epistle iii. 3. Titus ii. 3. and is rendered slanderers and accusers.

Likewise wherever the word *Satan* is mentioned in the New Testament, except Matt. xii. 26. it is in the singular only, and there it can include two Satans only; also where the words the Prince of this world, the Prince of the power of the air, occur, it is in the singular only. The same is true of the words, the Power of Darkness. When in Luke xi. 18. Jesus repeating what the Jews said of him, that he cast out Devils; the original word is *Diamonia*, a word of very different signification from *Diabolos*, or *Satanas*.

If the common opinion that there are numerous Satans, or Devils, is pleaded for, it certainly cannot be proved from any expressions either in the New Testament or in the Old; because those writings invariably use the word *Devil*, or *Satan*, in the singular, and never in the plural number as importing there are many such beings; and I will just note, that in all the conversations the Jews had with Jesus, they do not even once make use of the words *Diabolos*, i. e. *Devil*, or *Satanas*.

The first relation, in the New Testament, of Satan, or the Devil tempting any one, is that of Jesus. Matt. iv. 1—11. Mark i. 11, 12. Luke iv. 1—13. Matthew and Luke relate, he was led up of the spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil, and mark that the spirit driveth him into the Wilderness; and when he had fasted forty days

days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred. The particulars related of Satan's tempting Jesus is, his saying, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread; i. e. to supply you with food. His taking him up upon a pinnacle or battlement of the Temple, and saying to him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence, for it is written, he, (i. e. God) shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall hold thee up, lest, at any time, thou dash thy foot against a stone. His taking him up on an exceeding high mountain, and shewing him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saying, All these things will I give thee, and the glory of them, if thou wilt fall down and worship me; for they are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it.

I would just premise, that a person may be said to be tempted when an offer is made of what is agreeable to him, or when it excites in him some desire to accept of it; or when, as the apostle James saith, he is tempted, being drawn away of his own lust, and enticed, and thereby it bringeth forth sin.

Now, suppose it is admitted that Satan is a fallen angel, and that what he said to Jesus is to be literally understood; yet, I think it cannot be doubted but he knew who he was, and his design and end in tempting him. I should therefore judge that no man can really believe the proposals were agreeable to him, much less that they raised in him a desire to comply with either of them; and, as to the last, it is certain, that both Satan and Jesus well knew it was not in Satan's power to give him them had Jesus complied with the condition. On what real ground then can it be justly supposed, that if  
Satan

Satan knew he was the Son of God, he could have the least reason to believe or expect he could tempt him to comply with either proposal.

Indeed, if we may judge of this temptation as a true specimen of the artful wiles of Satan, (I mean if there is such a being) it certainly doth not evidence his abilities in tempting men to be superior to those of men; or, that he is a much more subtle and powerful tempter; for, had he, in either of those respects, been superior to men, I think we may justly conclude, that his tempting Jesus would have been much more artfully laid and conducted, and therefore more likely to have succeeded than in what is related by the Evangelists. I would finally observe, they have not given the least intimation, that Satan, in an invisible manner, unperceived by Jesus, infused into his mind any evil thoughts, or raised in him any inordinate desires to tempt him, as the means by which most men believe he tempts persons to sin.

The next relation of the Devil, or Satan's tempting, I will mention, is that of Judas. John xiii. 2. 27. it is said, That, supper being ended, the Devil now put into the head of Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus; or, that after supper he gave him the sop, when Satan entered into him. When he had taken it, he immediately went out, or he went his way, and communed with the chief priests, and said to them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they were glad, and covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver, and he promised and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude. Luke xxii. 3—6.

I must again intreat the reader to consider, that neither John nor Luke could have received, from the Old Testament, the least knowledge of Satan

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as a fallen angel, or of his having put into the heart of any man evil thoughts, by which he tempted him to sin; or, that he ever entered into any one to effect it. Neither is there any proof, in the evangelists, that they had received from Jesus the last knowledge of either; and, and indeed, this is the only account, in the Bible, of Satan's having entered into any man. For all the instances recorded in the New Testament of men's being possessed by an evil spirit, or spirits, are, of a demon, or demons, and not by Satan as a fallen angel.

Farther, I observe, that in every passage in the Evangelists in which Jesus mentioned to his apostles, or to Judas, his being betrayed by one of them, he did not give them the least intimation that he would be tempted to it by Satan, much less by his entering into him as the real cause of it.

If we impartially attend to what John has related of his principle and conduct, chap. xii. 6. that he cared not for the poor, and being purse-bearer, he used to pilfer what was in bank; as the original words are rendered by another translator: and likewise that Jesus said he is a devil, i. e. an adversary or accuser, and not clean, like the rest of the apostles; xiii. 11. and his covenanting with the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver, to betray him. It is probable we shall be led to understand John's and Luke's words, cited above, not in the literal sense, but only as expressive of Judas's principle and conduct as a very covetous man and an adversary to Jesus, who was then going to execute his design; and it is reasonable to believe, he previously knew the chief priests had sought to take and destroy Jesus. Luke says, Judas sought to betray him unto them, in the absence of the multitude, and therefore he came in the night, with the officers,

cers, to take him: and the Evangelists have related that the chief priests, &c. before that time had attempted to take him, but they did not, fearing the people.

How far these observations may be admitted to explain and also to ascertain the true meaning of the words under consideration, is submitted to the judgment of the inquisitive and candid reader. In my view, they appear the most probable salutation of them; at least the literal meaning seems to be attended with considerable, if not with insuperable difficulties, especially that of Satan's entering into Judas.

The next account of Satan I will mention, is that respecting Peter. Luke xxii. 31, 32. Jesus said to him, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, i. e. separate you from me, like as that grain is from the chaff, not to be united to me again. But he added, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, i. e. in producing a final separation from me; understanding literally, that Satan desired to have Peter for the purpose expressed in the text, it is very natural to ask to whom it was communicated? I presume we cannot well suppose it was to Jesus, because, prior to any effect it could have upon Peter, Jesus had prayed for him that his faith might not fail him in the sense just mentioned. If Satan's desire was not divulged, it could operate only in himself; but if it excited him to sift Peter, yet his Lord's praying for him would render his tempting him as ineffectual as what is related of his tempting Jesus; and if, as is generally believed, that Satan knows the thoughts and actions of men, he could not but know of Jesus's interposing in favor of his favorite disciple, and therefore that any attempt upon him must prove abortive.

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That Peter's faith failed him to a great degree, is manifest in the Evangelists : but, in attending to what they have related as the apparent cause, or occasion of it, we shall plainly discern it arose from a different adversary than Satan ; that is, from his own natural fear of being involved as a disciple of Jesus in the condemnation, &c. which he saw it was very probable would befall him from the hatred of the high priests, &c. against him when he was present at his trial, and heard him accused of being a malefactor and seditious person, and likewise charged with having designs against Cæsar's government, by assuming to himself the title of King of the Jews, and himself openly accused as an accomplice with Jesus.

This view of the cause of Peter's faith failing him, clearly explains and accounts for it as the adversary or Satan that occasioned it. If Satan was the real cause of his faith failing him, it must be attributed to his exciting his fear lest he should suffer with Jesus ; but of this there is not the least intimation in either of the evangelists, nor as it respects the rest of the apostles, who, as well as he, said, they would not deny him even unto death ; but it is plain their faith failed them as well as Peter's. That which is peculiar to him is, his thrice denying him at his trial, as is particularly related. And it is evident the evangelists have not given the least hint that Satan stirred up or tempted the high priests, &c. to act the part they did to Jesus, that occasioned Peter's fear, and which led him to deny his Lord. The true and apparent causes or occasions of the high priests, &c. proceedings against Jesus are clearly related by the evangelists, and which began to take place long before his trial ; for prior to that time the Pharisees, &c. on several occasions attempted to

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take



take him and put him to death, as is related in their writings. I may farther observe, that in every text in which is related Jesus told his disciples, or Peter in particular, that they would deny him thro' the weakness of their faith, alluding to the time when it took place ; he did not give them the least hint it would arise from the instigation of Satan on their mind. They could not have any real ground to believe this, because, as I have observed, there is not the least proof, either in the Old Testament, or the words of Jesus, so far as we are capable of judging, from which they could know there was a fallen angel, or that he tempted men to sin.

Having attempted to explain the passages wherein are related Satan's tempting Jesus and the two apostles, I will crave the reader's attention to what our Lord said in some of his parables of the wicked one, Satan, or the Devil, as tempting men ; and the first instance is that of the sower who sowed the good seed in his field. Matt. xiii. Mark iv. Luke vii. of the seed that was sown by the highway, he said, When one heard the word of the kingdom and understandeth it not, or hath not an honest and good heart, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth or taketh away that which was sown in his heart ; or when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. Satan's tempting these persons is represented to be his taking away the word out of their heart ; but not by his infilling, or putting into it evil thoughts, or raising in it evil desires. And it is unquestionably certain, that the above account differs from all other instances related in the New Testament, where he is said to tempt men. The persons above described in the parable, I think are plainly alluded to, and represented

tented verses 13, 14, 15, as dull of hearing, having closed their eyes, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them; which plainly accounts for the word that was sown in their hearts not abiding there.

In the parable of the man who made a great supper, Luke xiv. 15, &c. as somewhat similar in our Lord's intention with that just considered; he hath explicitly assigned other and very different causes why the persons invited to it did not accept of the invitation than that of Satan's tempting them: They are these, They all began to make excuse; the first said, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused.—And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused.—And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So the servant came and shewed his lord all these things. These causes why the word did not abide in their hearts, are similar with those Jesus assigned why the seed that was sown on stony ground, and on that where the thorns grew up and choaked it, viz. when tribulation ariseth, because of the word, and by and by they are offended; or the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, and pleasures of this life, enter in and choak the word, and he beareth no fruit. These obvious and usual occasions of temptation to the persons represented in those parables, the people present could easily understand, and also apply it usefully to themselves; but they could not as it respects the secret suggestions of Satan, or the Devil.

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And, in the course of Jesus's Ministry, he mentioned many other causes why men did not receive the word than in those parables, as must be obvious to every one who reads with attention his discourses to the people who attended him. Thus, when he said to some of the unbelieving Jews.—How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

I will just subjoin the following texts, in which he hath particularly mentioned several other evident causes of men's being tempted not to receive the word, that may be compared to those represented by the highway, without giving the least intimation of the wicked one taking away the word out of their heart. Luke xiii. 24. xiv. 25—35.

But what just or satisfactory proof is there to be given why it ought to be believed that Satan tempts men by taking away the word out of the heart of those Jesus compared to the highway on which the seed was sown, lest they should believe and be saved, and yet not tempt or draw away those who have received the word with joy; and where, for a time, it promised fair for bringing forth fruit? For it is undeniable, that Jesus did not attribute it to the temptation of Satan, but to other manifest and common temptations to men, which cannot but be admitted, and which his hearers could easily understand; but, I presume, they could not, as it respected Satan as a fallen angel, for reasons and proofs already offered. The adversary to the several persons above represented, were the things of this world, such as Jesus mentioned, which too strongly operated upon the heart of some of them, as reasons why the word did not take any root in it: or why they did not accept of the invitation to the

the supper; and of others, who received it with joy, yet did not bring forth fruit to perfection; or, in the expressive words of Jesus, respecting the man who brought forth fruit, They had not an honest and good heart.

The conduct of the men, compared to the seed sown by the highway, is affectingly exemplified in what is related of the young man, Mark x. 17—27. who asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life? His riches, and the thought of parting with them as a condition thereto, made him go away without receiving the least benefit from the seed Jesus sowed in his heart.

A parable similar with the foregoing is contained in v. 24—30. This Jesus explained to his disciples, v. 36—43. in which is contained these things; The field is the world, i. e. all men, both Jews and Gentiles, as v. 41. The seed sown represents the children of the kingdom, i. e. his disciples, called the righteous; v. 43, who are contradistinguished from the world, or the tares; or those who offend and do iniquity. The tares are descriptive of the latter persons, and are called the children of the wicked one, or the Devil, or the enemy who sowed tares among the wheat. The former are the good ground, which brought forth good fruit.

If we were to interpret our Lord's words of the tares, literally, as the children of the wicked one, or the Devil, it would lead us to conclude it was wholly owing to his temptations and their influence, in causing them to offend and do iniquity, which cannot well be reconciled with, and admitted, by those who pay a proper attention to what he hath said of the causes or occasions of men being guilty of iniquity contained in these texts, Matt. xii. 34, &c. xv. 18, &c. xxiii. 1, &c.

Luke

Luke xi. 37, &c. Mark vii. 5, &c. Luke vi. 43, &c. John iii. 19, 20, 21. xii. 42, 43. In these passages it is very apparent that he attributes the wickedness, or iniquity of men to the influence which their different passions and inordinate desires have on their mind in producing their criminal dispositions and conduct, without giving the least intimation to those he addressed, that either or both arose from the temptations of the Devil, as an invisible apostate spirit. And similar with what he hath represented is that of the apostle; Rom. i. ii. iii. vi. respecting both Jews and Gentiles, who were all under sin, or they yielded their members, instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. This corrupt principle and conduct he calls the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts. Contrasted with the old man which they had put off, is the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. The apostle personifies sin as the old man; but no rational man can well believe that he intended a real person, and that they had actually put him off or expelled him from them, but only that they had forsaken those sins which he styles the old man. In like manner he is to be understood of the new man they had put on. From our Lord's words just quoted, and those of the Apostle, I think we may with an high degree of probability, at least conclude he did not intend a fallen angel, as the enemy, but the wicked conduct of ungodly men.

The observations made upon the foregoing passages in Matthew, may possibly assist us in explaining another. John vii. 44. Jesus said to the Jews, ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he

he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it. In verse 34, he said, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. In these words he personifies sin, calling it their master, and they his servants or slaves; in like manner as Paul represents the Romans before their conversion. chap. vi. He then changes the person to that of father, saying, Ye do that which ye have seen with your father; or, ye do the deeds of your father, v. 41. As he hath personified sin as their master, and also their father, whose deeds they did, from whence they became servants of the former, or children of the latter, by imitation.\* It surely cannot be judged to be offering violence to, or unjustifiably straining the sense of the word Devil, to suppose by that word he personified sin as their father, by doing his lusts, or deeds. I cannot well omit observing, that when the apostle mentioned Eve's transgression. 2. Cor. xi. 3. he did not say it was occasioned by the Devil's tempting her, but that it was by the subtilty of the serpent, as in Genesis. And it is undeniable that there is not one text in the Bible in which mention is made of her being tempted by the Devil; i. e. a fallen angel.

That by their father, v. 38, Jesus did not mean the Devil, v. 44. seems pretty plain, from his saying, They did that which they had seen with their father. But, I presume, there is no man that believes they had seen the deeds of the Devil as a murderer and a liar. When Jesus represents the Jews he was speaking to as the children of the Devil, or that he was their father, he does not impute it to his secret viles or instigation in their hearts, no more than in verses 38. 41. After a like manner of expression he said to them, If ye were the children of Abraham ye would do the works of Abraham. But, I imagine, there is no man who  
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believes he intended, that if they had done his works it would have been by the influence of his secret suggestions in their heart. But only that if they had heard and obeyed his word, like as Abraham did the Revelations which God made to him, they would have been his children. See Rom. iv. 11, 12, 16.

To the Jews Jesus said, Matt. xxiii. 31. Ye are witnesses to yourselves that ye are the children of them that killed the prophets. Or, as he saith, Luke xi. 48. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers, for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. But, I apprehend there is no man who believes that they were witnesses it was owing to the secret instigations or influence which those wicked men had on their minds which led them to act the part he accused them of; but his meaning is as in the other passage, that their principles and conduct were similar with those murderers of the prophets, and which the Jews afterwards manifested towards him, which he has described in the parable. Matt. xxi. 33. 38.\*

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\* When in Acts xi. 9, 10, the Apostle characterizes Bar-jus as a child of the Devil, perhaps it is not easy to determine whether he intended that of forcery alone, or included his other wicked principles and conduct he accused him of; or whether he attributes the latter as the effect of the former. If he intended that first mentioned, I presume it will be attended with insuperable difficulty in explaining how or after what manner an invisible spirit instructed him in the art of forcery, and the practice of it, so as for him to know that he received it from him. In the relation of the conversation which Peter had with Simon the forcerer, chap. viii. he doth not give the least hint either that he was taught the art by the Devil, or that what he said to him of his heart not being right in the sight of God, and that he was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, arose from the influence or power the Devil had over him. Yet, as these two characters are considerably similar, it is some-

I would further observe, that as Jesus did not in any of the foregoing texts explain to his apostles or the Jews, his meaning of the word Satan, or the Devil, i. e. whether he was a fallen angel or not, they could not know he intended such a being, for reasons I have before offered; and, it is remarkable, that the text in John vii. 44. is the only one in which he attributed the principle and conduct of the unbelieving Jews towards himself to the Devil. For, in his numerous, severe, and pointed reproofs of them, he ascribed it to their corrupt hearts and wicked conduct, which they had too long manifested in their not keeping the law of God; or, as he tells them, had they believed Moses, they would have believed him; but, as they did not, they withstood the united and incontestible evidences he gave them, that he was the Son of God, and therefore they ought to obey his word. Must it not, therefore, to an attentive

somewhat to be expected the Apostle would have attributed one or both to the same Being as Paul has done; I may just observe, that in every account we have in the Old Testament of forcerers, and the kindred arts, there is not the least intimation that they received the knowledge of either from the Devil, or after what manner to practise them.

If we suppose the Apostle Paul styles Barjesus the Child of the Devil, on account of his being led or excited to commit those sins he accused him of, it may be replied that there is not any thing similar with it contained in the Old Testament, and yet those writings are the only authentic records from whence he could derive any knowledge of what he mentions as the effect of the power of the Devil on the heart or actions of men. But if we may conclude that by the words Thou Child of the Devil, the Apostle intended only to express the enormity and complication of his crimes as a forcerer and a very wicked immoral man, it will remove all the difficulty by giving an easy and rational solution of them. In like manner as I have shewn in what the Apostle John hath said of Cain, that he was of that wicked, or, as in the preceding verse, a Child of the Devil.

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and unbiassed reader, appear somewhat difficult to be accounted for, that of those Jews only he has attributed their principle and conduct to the Devil; whereas, of all others, who were equally corrupt and unbelieving, he did not even once tell any of them they were his children, in the common acceptance of those words, especially when they gave him as great occasion for expressing himself in as pointed a manner. To instance only those Pharisees who wickedly and foolishly said he cast out devils, i. e. demons, by Belzebub the Prince of Devils, i. e. demons.

As it is manifest our Saviour has personified the wicked Jews who killed the prophets, as the cause of producing children like themselves, i. e. the Jews he spake to, who, it is certain, had not the least influence in effecting it; why should it be judged incredible that he should speak after a like manner in his using the words Satan, &c. The Apostle, in the 6th chapter to the Romans, has personified sin, as having been their lord and master, whom, before their conversion, they served, in fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. But every intelligent person, without the least objection, or difficulty, admits he is not to be understood in a literal sense, but only as an expressive figure, in which, in strong language, he describes their former wicked principles and conduct, as he doth in the 1st chapter.

SECT.

## S E C T. III.

*I have, in the foregoing pages, considered all the passages in the Evangelists, in which the wicked one, &c. is said to tempt men to sin; I will now attend to those in the Acts of the Apostles, and the other parts of the New Testament, of a similar kind.*

AND the first that is related in the Acts, is chap. v. 3, 4, 9, concerning Ananias, to him Peter said, Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, to keep back part of the price of the land?—After telling him, in the next verse, it was in his own power or choice to sell the land or not; and after he had sold it, to keep the price of it, or put it into the joint stock, he charged him with conceiving what he had done, saying, Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, (in saying it was the whole given into the fund when it was but a part of it) but unto God. It may be said that Peter's words, v. 3, carry in them an affirmation that Ananias's heart was filled by Satan, as the moving or exciting cause of his committing that sin. Also that the Apostle really knew there was such a being, and that he tempts men to sin. To which I reply, that the Apostle could not know either, from the Old Testament; and it is certain there is not any account in the Evangelists, that Jesus made any discovery of either to the Apostle, or other of them. And it is indisputably true, that he could not know either, by the light of his natural reason; besides, his attributing the sin to Satan, in the sense commonly understood, is not con-

sistent with what he said to Ananias and his wife. To the former, Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart; thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.—To the latter, How is it that we have agreed together to tempt the spirit of the Lord? In which he plainly attributes the primary moving cause to arise in their own breasts, and in contriving how they might put it in practice.

Peter's words therefore may be thought to create some difficulty in determining whether he imputes Ananias's heart, being filled by Satan, or that the first rise of it was in himself, in conceiving the thing: for, if Peter believed it was primarily owing to the former, it could not be to the latter but only in a secondary sense; and had the Apostle known this to be the true state of the case, one would naturally conclude he would in one or both the latter addresses to him, have in that manner represented it: but, it is certain, from his own words, he hath not. From the whole relation of this singular transaction, it appears to me, that the primary excitement in the heart of Ananias, to contrive and put in execution what is related of him, arose from his own covetous mind, which suggested to him the thought of keeping back part of the price of the land, under the deluding hope, that could he succeed in concealing the transaction from the Apostle and others, he might receive from the joint stock a greater income than he had any right to; and also keep part of it for his own use; as may appear probable from chap. ii. 44, 45. iv. 32, 34, 35. and vi. 1, 2, 3. But their deceitful and criminal conduct was not only detected, but also punished of God, in a very signal and exemplary manner, as a solemn and affecting warning to other disciples, to avoid the like deceitful and wicked conduct.

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That, by the word Satan, Peter did not intend a fallen angel, is to me undeniable from what I have observed of the entire silence in the Old Testament, of such a being, or his tempting men to sin, by his insinuating evil thoughts into the mind; and that so far as we know, Jesus did not inform his Apostles of it. It follows therefore, that Ananias could not understand or believe that by the word Satan Peter intended such a being. Neither could Peter, so far as we know, have any real evidence on which to believe his heart was filled by him as the exciting cause of his doing what he did; or Ananias have any inward perception or consciousness of it. And, it hath been observed, that Peter imputes Ananias's sin to his conceiving the thing in his heart, and that he and his wife had agreed together in that act.

When, in 2 Cor. xi. 14. the Apostle saith, Satan himself is *transformed* into an angel of light, I think he cannot well be understood to mean into one like an holy angel, it having no connection or coincidence with v. 13, 15. and therefore most probably he means an apostle of light, i. e. himself. See Gal. iv. 14. But then this transformation must be in a visible character, as a teacher of his tenets, or doctrines, or an invisible transformation. If we suppose the former to be his meaning it will be attended with very great, if not with insuperable difficulties, to account for; there not being the least hint, much less an instance of it related in the New Testament. If we suppose the Apostle means the latter, it will, I presume, be attended with equal difficulties. For, it is natural to ask, how, or by what means could his ministers come at the knowledge of this, or receive their doctrine, or any explicit direction or authority, as from him, or act as his ministers.

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In the first Epistle chapter iv. 6. the same original word is translated I have—in a figure *transferred*—to myself, and Apollos—or rather to himself only; that is, I have contradistinguished, or contrasted myself and Apollos with the false apostles, for your sakes,, that as we always have acted as the stewards or servants of Christ only, and not made the least claim of headship over you, as though you were our disciples. (See chap. i. 12—15.) ye might learn, by our example, not to think of men, i. e. the false apostles, your leaders, above that which is written, and therefore not be puffed up for one against another. In this contrast of himself with the false apostles, he is not to be understood to admit their having the least claim to be the apostles of Christ any more than Satan, whom, he says, is transformed into an angel of light, i. e. an apostle of Christ.

To the foregoing considerations I may add, that when the Apostles in his 1 Epistle i. ii. contrasts the tenets or doctrines of the false apostles with the revelations of the spirit of God made to him, or the wisdom of God in the gospel, which he had taught the Corinthians; he calls their wisdom the wisdom of the wise, the wisdom of men, and the wisdom and spirit of men, and the wisdom and spirit of the world, or of the Princes of this world; but he hath not given the least hint that it was the wisdom or doctrine of Satan, which had he believed, it is natural to conclude he would have mentioned it, as a very strong argument why they ought to renounce it, and the false apostles as his ministers; but of these things he is entirely silent.

I will hazard a conjecture, and such I offer it, on v. 14, which, if admitted seems to obviate the difficulties above-mentioned, which is this, that one of the false apostles, on some account, perhaps as a Jew,

Jew, chap i. 23. 2 Epistle xi. 22, 23, was head or chief among them, and on that account put himself upon an equality, in his apostolic character, with Paul, and that the others acted at least in a measure, if not wholly by his instruction and authority, and with him were deceitful workers transforming themselves into the apostles and ministers of Christ.

The Apostles styling him Satan, or an adversary, i. e. to him and his doctrine, is not much unlike what Jesus said of Peter, that he was Satan and of Judas, that he is a devil.

When the Apostle, addressing himself to the Ephesians, Acts xx. 29. 30, saith, that after his departure, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock, also of your own selves, shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them, as was the conduct of those false apostles at Corinth, he doth not give them the least hint that any of them would be the ministers of Satan. And when our Saviour foretold that false teachers, or prophets, would arise and deceive many by their doctrine, he did not give the least intimation of their being the agents of Satan, or that they would receive his tenets, or act by his authority.

The Apostle saith to the Ephesians, chap. ii. 2. That in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh and of the mind.

Whoever reads Romans i, ii, iii, will plainly observe the Apostle hath given a particular and large representation of the principles and conduct of the Heathens, and in general from whence they arose ;  
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but it is certain he hath not attributed either to the temptations of Satan, but to the course of this world, or the examples of those they lived amongst, and from whom they learned them, by which they fulfilled the desires of the mind, &c.

And the Apostle's representation of the principles and conduct of the Roman Christians before their conversion, as chap. vi. perfectly corresponds with the above chapters. See also Ephes. iv. 17—22. Col. iii. 5—9. May we not therefore, with great probability, at least, if not with an absolute certainty, conclude, that by the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worked in the children of disobedience, the Apostle did not mean a fallen angel, but their own corrupt and wicked desires and principles; besides, it should be remembered it hath been shewed that there is not any account in the Old Testament, of a fallen angel, and therefore that neither Paul nor those Christians could know there was such a being, and that he tempted them to fulfil the desires of the mind, &c.

Another text I will offer to the reader's consideration is Ephes. vi. 11, Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.

Whoever believes that these Christians understood the Apostle, by the word Devil, to mean a fallen angel, and that they ought to stand against his wiles, lest they should fail in acting agreeable to their Christian profession,—it will be natural to ask him from what unquestionable records or proofs they received the knowledge of each? That they did not, nor could receive it from the Old Testament, hath been made evident in the preceding pages. Also there is not the least trace in the Evangelists that Jesus revealed either to his disciples; and it is a certain truth that they could not know

know them from the light of nature, consequently they could not understand the Apostle in the sense generally embraced by men at this day. But if by the word Devil, the Apostle meant an adversary they were well acquainted with, it must mean men only who were their adversaries; and this appears to me evident from the next verse and verse 16. Compare Matt. x. 18. Mark xiii. 9, 12, 13, which perfectly accord with every expression of Jesus, in which he foretold to his disciples who would be their adversaries. See 1 Theff. iii. 3, 4, 5. And whoever reads Luke's History of the Acts, and Paul's writings, will plainly discern that it was such the Christians are exhorted to stand against their wiles.

Besides, I may add, if they stood against, or resisted the wiles of an invisible spirit, which affected their minds as a temptation, they must not only evidently perceive its operation and influence on their mind, but also distinguish those wiles from other excitements of temptation, arising either within themselves or from the impression of external causes. But I am fully convinced that there are no proofs or facts in Scripture to evince that they or any others did make such a distinction between them; and yet if they did not, I leave it to the consideration of the impartial enquirer to explain clearly the means by which they could really know what were his wiles, and also when they stood against or resisted them. It is upon their being able to make this distinction that they could discern and form a true judgment of the propriety and applicableness of the Apostle's exhortation to them.

The foregoing observations, I apprehend, may tend to explain our Lord's words to Paul, Acts xxvi. 18. that he sent him to the Gentiles to turn  
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them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan, unto God. See v. 20. I should think it can hardly be doubted, that by the Gentiles being in darkness, and in the power of Satan, are designed to express the same thing, and not that the former was the effect of the power of the latter. After a like manner I presume we are to understand the words turned to light, or unto God, are expressive of the same state, i. e. their conversion to the gospel. Ephes. iv. 20—24. Now, what the state of darkness is, or the sins intended, we learn from Rom. xiii. 12, 13, 14. The Apostle, writing to the Gentile Colossians, useth expressions perfectly equivalent with those we are considering, i. 13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. What he intends by their having been in the power of darkness, i. e. their former sins, is plain from iii. 1—8. and Ephes. iv. 17—19. v. 8, 11, 12.

Another text, somewhat similar with that in Ephesians ii. 2. already considered, is what the Apostle saith, 2 Cor. iv. 4. In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.\* By comparing these words with chapter the

\* Sir Edward Knatchbull in his Annotations, renders the words under consideration thus:—"If our gospel be hid, it is hid among those that are lost; among whom God hath blinded the minds of the unbelievers of this age, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them (that is so shine) as that they should see and understand." See Rom. xi. 3, &c. 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11, 12.

If the Apostle alluded to Isaiah vi. 8, &c. it is plain that their hearing and not understanding, &c. is represented

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the 3d, and particularly with verses 13, 14, 15, it appears very plain to me, that he spake of the unbelieving Jews respecting their blindness of mind, i. e. they did not see the true design and end of the law as centering in Christ, no more than the Israelites saw the face of Moses when he covered it with a veil. That by the God of this world, the Apostle did intend Satan, and that he was the real cause of the blindness of mind of the Jews, is plain to me from his own account of it in these texts. Rom. ix. 31, 32, 33. x. 1—4. xi. 7—32. 1 Cor. i. 22, 23. See also 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8, John ix. 39, 40, 41. Matt. xiii. 13, 14, 15. And the Apostle himself was a remarkable instance of that blindness of mind, or his ignorance in unbelief, which he imputed to the Jews. But, I judge, it will appear evident to every one who is conversant in his writings, that he hath not even once attributed it to Satan as the god of this world, but to other causes, as manifest facts, from whence it arose. 1 Tim. i. 13. Neither hath Jesus, nor the Evangelists, in any one text, ascribed the blindness of mind of the Jews, to the God of this world, i. e. to Satan; but to very different ones that are plainly related in their writings, and therefore are easily discerned and admitted by every impartial reader.

as from God, who sent him to deliver that message to them. For though it is said in John xii. 39, 40, Therefore they (that is the Jews, to whom Jesus addressed himself) could not believe, because that Esaias said again, &c. Yet I presume it cannot reasonably be believed that the prophet of himself was able to effect what is mentioned.

The true reason or cause of their hearing and not understanding, &c. was their wicked principles and conduct, as appears plain from Isaiah chap. i. Jer. v. 21. Ezek. xii. 2. And in a like sense is Paul to be understood, Acts xxviii. 24—27.

The Apostle Peter, in his 1st epistle, v. 8, 9, 10, saith, Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal kingdom, by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered a while, (i. e. under those afflictions) make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.

This representation of the Devil, or adversary (they are exhorted to resist) in his eagerness after, and devouring his prey, or whom he may, is manifestly taken from the lion's ravenous fierceness after his prey; and when he has seized it, his devouring it. And whoever reads the following texts, besides many more, will plainly discern it fully exemplified in the persecutors of the disciples of Jesus, especially by the unbelieving Jews, in their ravenous spirit and conduct towards them. Acts viii. 13, 21. Gal. i. 13. Acts xiii. 44, 45, 50. xvi. 5, 6, 7, 13. xxi. 27—31. xxii. 21, 22, 23. xxiii. 12, &c. 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. But the Apostle's representation does not equally, if at all, apply to the conduct of the Devil, who, by most men, is supposed to attack men by his secret or imperceptible devices, or instigations on their mind or heart. Even his tempting Jesus, as it is related, doth not accord with Peter's representation.

I think it is natural to suppose, that the afflictions which these Christians endured, and were accomplished, also in their brethren that were in the world, from the same kind of adversary, are the persecutions the Apostle mentions more at large, chap. iii. 12—19. If this is admitted, as most probable, we cannot well fail in understanding him

him to mean the adversary that persecuted them. Perhaps to this will be objected his exhorting them to resist the adversary as though he intended a personal resistance. But to this it may be replied, in his own words ; it was by being steadfast in the faith, i. e. by an inflexible adherence to their profession as Christians. There are two texts in which the same original word occurs, that may serve to illustrate and confirm this to be his meaning. Our Saviour told his Apostles, Luke xxi. 15, I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist. This was exemplified in Stephen, Acts vi. 9. 10. The unbelieving Jews were not able *to resist* the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake to them. In this case there was resisting on both sides ; on his it was by the wisdom and the spirit.

To those Peter wrote to there was no difficulty in their knowing what were their own afflictions and those of their brethren that were in the world, but there seems to me a very considerable one attending their knowing what they were, if understood, of the wiles or devices of an invisible spirit on their hearts or minds.

Should it be said that the Devil stirred up or excited their enemies to persecute them, and in that sense he exhorted them to resist him ; I answer, that in the many texts in the Evangelists in which Jesus declared to his apostles and disciples what it was that would stir up their enemies to persecute them, he has not even once attributed it to the Devil. Neither hath Luke, in his History of the Apostles, in describing the persecutions they met with, even in one text, attributed it to him. Instead of this, Jesus and that historian have ascribed it to other and very different causes that are therein plainly related, and very much because they were  
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his disciples ; or, as he said, If they persecute me, they will also persecute you.

There is one text in the 1 Epistle to the Thessalonians, that, I judge, will illustrate and confirm the foregoing explication of that under consideration, chap. ii. 18. Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I, Paul) once and again, but *Satan hindered us*. In looking into Acts xvii. it appears, that after he had converted many of the Thessalonians to the faith of Christ, or that they had obeyed the gospel he preached to them, the unbelieving Jews seeing his success, stirred up the baser sort of the people, and raised so great a persecution against him, and the new converts, that the brethren judged it expedient to send away Paul by night, in a secret manner, who went to Berea, where, for some time, he preached the gospel, and converted many of them. Upon those Jews at Thessalonica, hearing of this, they came there also, and acted after a like manner ; upon which account the brethren sent Paul away to Athens, some of whom accompanied him, but Timothy and Silas continued behind. In this state of things the Apostle left his new converts at Thessalonica, at which his mind was so uneasy, that when Timothy came to him at Athens, he sent him back to them, that he might comfort and establish them in their faith under their persecutions ; who, on his return to Corinth, Acts xviii. 5. brought him a most agreeable account of their steadfastness in the faith. On a view of this state of things, there seems to be great difficulty in judging who the Satan, or adversary is, that hindered him from returning to them, as he had more than once wished to do, namely, the persecuting Jews.

That which adds some force to this explication, is, what he says, chap. iii. 4, 5, 6. For, verily, when

when we were with you we told you before, that we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass, and ye know, for this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest, by some means, the tempter having tempted you, and our labour be in vain, &c. The tempter likely to tempt them, appears evident from the context, i. e. the persecuting Jews, by whom they suffered tribulation, as well as himself.

The Apostle James, in chap. iv. 7. saith, resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. In verses 5, 6, he tells them, The spirit, or temper that dwells in some of them, lusteth to envy. But to those who endeavoured to govern it, he assures them for their encouragement, that God giveth more grace, but he resisteth the proud and envious, but giveth grace unto the humble. And then he very justly exhorts them to submit themselves to God, i. e. to his grace; resist the Devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. If, by their resisting the Devil, the Apostle means the spirit of pride and envy excited or stirred up in them by him; or that by his secret influence he strengthened it, than for the persons to judge of the propriety and justness of his exhortation, they must have clear evidence by which they could know it was really produced or wrought in them by the Devil, unless the Apostle and the persons believed it never existed in the minds of men, but from that cause alone; which, I presume, no one will attempt to prove, much less effect it. For if it is allowed, as surely it will, that the spirit of pride may be, and is often produced in the mind of man, from very different causes, both internal as well as external. If this is allowed, then the person in whom it dwells, must, as was observed, have a real inward perception, or evidence,

evidence, by which he can and actually did distinguish its arising from the excitation or influence of the Devil, and not from other and very different causes, otherwise he would not have been able to know, with any real certainty, it arose from him. For if he is incapable of making that distinction, he certainly cannot know whether he resists the Devil, or any internal or outward well known cause, or causes, from whence that spirit lusting in him, may be, or is produced; and when not resisted, shews itself in envy to others.

And, I persuade myself, there is not now any rational man who believes that Satan does tempt men to be proud, or envious, that can make that distinction, or discrimination between that which is excited in him by Satan, and what arises from his natural passion not duly governed, and from whence he is drawn into sin. This pride and envy the Apostle speaks of, seems, from the context, to be the adversary they were to resist, and concerning which they were competent judges; but, I apprehend, they were not, as it respected an invisible spirit. Indeed, did it appear that the sacred writers have always, or very generally attributed pride, or the usual effect of it, envy, to the secret instigation of the Devil, as a fallen angel, there would be some reason to believe that the Apostle intended him in the text under consideration; but, I presume, it will not be found thus represented in any of those writings.

Similar with the Apostle's words, are those of Paul, Ephes. iv. 29, 27, Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the Devil. The above observation, I judge, will apply equally to these words, because no one can really distinguish between anger and its effects, as arising from any external cause, affecting that

that passion, and what may be effected in him by the influence of an invisible spirit.

In chap. i. 14, 15, the Apostle hath given a very plain account of what are the inward natural causes in every man, of his being tempted, i. e. when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin. This is so entirely correspondent to the natural and universal experience of every man, that I should judge it will be admitted is not only justly founded, but so far as men really know what passes within themselves, is the original, inward, and true cause of their being tempted to sin.

The Apostle John, in his 1 Epistle iii. 8. 10, saith, He that committeth sin is of the Devil, for the Devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the Devil. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil. Whoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. Understanding these words literally and without limitation, and comparing them with chap. v. 18, 19, some may be ready to suppose he believed and has asserted, that every wicked action men commit, originates from the influence or devices of the Devil in their heart, and that Jesus was sent to destroy his power in them, or his work manifest in their conduct.

The Apostle saith of Cain, verse 12, he was of that wicked one, or one of the children of the Devil; as v. 10. who slew his brother, or did not love him, and wherefore slew he him, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. These words may assist us in explaining those under consideration, and the last cited text; for he himself has here assigned the real and true cause

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from whence Cain was excited to commit that wicked action. And this perfectly agrees with what is related in Gen. iv. 4, &c. where it is said, The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect, and Cain was very wrath, and his countenance fell. To whom the Lord said, Why art thou wrath, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted; and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. Under this state of Cain's mind, and his suffering his wrath to overcome his reason, and his not being influenced by what the Lord said to him, it is manifest he was excited to kill his brother; or, in the words of the Apostle James, just cited, He was tempted being drawn away by his own lust, and enticed; and when lust had conceived, it brought forth sin. In the above chapter it is indisputable that there is not the least intimation of Cain's being tempted to that action by the instigation of the Devil, as a fallen angel, as was noted. The Apostle hath assigned the true cause of his slaying his brother, which coincides with what is related in Genesis. Seeing then he speaks of Cain as of that wicked one, or one of the children of the Devil, though it doth in the last appear from Genesis, nor his own words, that he was excited to it by him, but by his own wrath against his brother. Why should it be believed he attributes his sin, or that of all other men, to the wicked one, or the Devil. By either of those words one would therefore rather be led to believe the Apostle intends an adversary like as was that to Cain, i. e. mens unsubdued passions, or desires; and on that account he calls them the children of the Devil, or of the wicked one; and from mens having been influenced thereby, the world laid in wickedness, correspondent to

to which the Apostle speaks of the Gentile world, Ephes. v. 6. Col. iii. 6. That they were the children of disobedience. Or to the Thessalonians, they were children of the night, and of darkness; or, in our Lord's words to the unbelieving Jews, That they were the children of those men who in ages past killed the prophets. Compare what hath been observed with Rom. vi. in which chapter the Apostle attributes the wickedness of the Heathen world to a like adversary that led Cain to slay his brother, i. e. they yielded their members or passions as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; or by obeying the lusts of their mortal body, sin reigned in and over them. To reform men from their sins which arose from those causes, as their adversary was one of the primary ends and purposes for which the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy those works; or, in the words of the Apostle John, the works of the Devil.

That which will much illustrate what I have observed, are the exhortations of the Apostle Paul to those in whom Christ, by his ministers, had destroyed their wicked works. And the whole of it is comprehended in the last cited chapter. To whom he saith, Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof, &c. and add, Ephes. v. 25, 26, 27. iv. 17—29. v. 3, &c. Col. iii. 5—10.

In further support and illustration of the foregoing scripture proofs and observations, shewing it is at least highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that the passages I have quoted, are not to be understood, in the common acceptation, of the real existence of a fallen angel, and that he tempts men to sin, I will offer what the Apostle saith, Gal. iv. 17. Rom. vii. 21, 22, 23, compared with vi.

11—20. In chap. vii. he clearly describes the Jews as sinners under the law, wherein it is exceeding evident to me, he represents the inward man as consisting of two parts; one is, his reason and conscience; the other, his several passions and appetites. The former are appointed by the Author of his being, to rule or govern the latter; and when they are not under its direction and control, they move and excite him to sinful actions, in opposition to his reason and conscience. And he as plainly describes the inward struggle, or conflict between them; one as the law of his mind, and the other the law of his members; and that when the latter prevails over the former, he is brought into captivity to sin; or, in his own words, I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me; or, I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members; or, as he expresses it in other words in the Galatians, The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye do not the things that ye would. The lusts of the flesh are particularly mentioned, Rom. i, 19, &c. Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

I cannot avoid particularly observing, that in the fore-cited chapters the Apostle hath not even hinted that the members of the man who is captivated by sin, is excited or stirred up, or brought into that state by Satan, but entirely by his own ungoverned lusts, or inordinate desires warring against the law of his mind. And yet, I should think, it will be allowed to be natural to expect he would have mentioned this with the other causes of it, especially considering what he has particularly said upon that subject, had he been of the same opinion with  
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most men at this day, who attribute almost, if not all the sins which men commit, to the devices of Satan.

I shall here subjoin Mr. Farmer's explication of some texts where the words Devil and Satan occur, and I will here produce several passages from the New Testament:—Have not I (saith Christ) chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil?—He here refers to the traitor, who was not the chief of fallen angels, but one who acted the part of an enemy in betraying his master. Neither give place to the Devil; that is, give no occasion to the railer or slanderer to reproach your religion; which is the sense given of this passage by Erasmus and others. A Bishop must not be a novice, or a new convert, lest, being lifted up with pride, he falls into the condemnation of the Devil, or calumniator. Moreover he must have a good report of them that are without, lest he should fall into reproach, and the snare of the Devil, or the adversary and the slanderer. It is hard to say what peculiar advantage the Devil might derive from a Bishop's want of a good report of them that are without; but it is easy to see that this would expose him to the censure and to the stratagems of the enemies of religion, who might try to shame him out of those principles, which served only to reproach and condemn him. The term Devil, is used in the plural number, in the New Testament, just as Satan is in the Old; when it cannot refer to fallen angels. St. Paul, in two of his epistles, forbids women to be Devils, rendered slanderers, and false accusers. 1 Tim. iii. 11. Titus ii. 3. In this sense it is used of men, 2 Tim, iii. 3, and rendered false accusers.

In the 1 Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. v. 5, are these words respecting the incestuous member  
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of that congregation :—To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus,

To an attentive and unbiassed man who reads these words and the context, I believe he will find it extremely difficult to form a just conception in what sense the person was to be delivered unto, or put in the power of Satan, if understood to be an invisible spirit, especially to answer the end there mentioned ; for it cannot consistent with reason be supposed, much less believed, that a malevolent spirit, being the avowed enemy of man, as is generally believed he is, would exert his power over him, to effect that salutary end ; but on the contrary, try his utmost to continue his impenitence perpetual, that he might not be saved. If we may be permitted to suppose, that by his being delivered unto Satan, means not only his being separated from the congregation, equally as he was before his conversion ; but also excluded from the benefits he enjoyed as a member of Christ's body ; and that this would have a very probable tendency to bring him to a true sense of his crime, that he might be saved. It will, I presume, be the most natural and rational explication of the Apostle's general meaning, and which seems to be confirmed from the effect it produced, as mentioned by him, 2 Ephes, ii. 5, &c. vii. 12.

Somewhat similar to the incestuous Corinthian being delivered unto Satan, &c. is what the Apostle mentions, 1 Tim. iii. 20, of his conduct towards Hymencus and Alexander, whom he had delivered unto Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme. But can any rational man really believe, that if they had been delivered into the power of a malignant spirit, the supposed enemy of man, that he would have exerted it to reform them from their wicked

wicked conduct, that they might not in future blaspheme, but act consistent with their Christian character?—I presume he cannot believe this of him, but, on the contrary, that he would have exerted his influence over them to continue it. Whatever therefore the Apostle meant by the word Satan, he cannot in reason be understood to intend a malignant apostate angelic spirit.

Should any one suppose that by delivering either of the persons unto Satan, the Apostle intends his inflicting on them some bodily or mental disorder, by which means the former might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, and the latter persons learn thereby not to blaspheme; it may be justly replied, that such a supposition hath not the least countenance or support from any thing of the kind in all the Bible, and therefore is inadmissible in explaining the genuine meaning of the Apostle. Should it be urged that the bodily and mental disorders which the Demoniacs were afflicted with, related in the Evangelists, were inflicted by the Devil, as a fallen angel, it may be justly replied, that they are not attributed to such a being, but to a demon or demons, i. e. the soul or spirit of man departed. For in every instance which in our translation the word Devil or Devils, is rendered Diamonion and not Diabolos.

In reference to this very case of the offender, the Apostle saith to his brethren, chap. ii. 10, 11, that he forgave him upon his repentance in the person, or by the authority of Christ, and that the brethren ought to do the like, for which he assigns this reason, viz. Left Satan get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices. If the Apostle and his brethren were not ignorant, but really knew what they were; or as the original word is rendered the mind, as chap. iii. 24.  
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iv. 4. xi. 3. of Satan; it is certain they were better qualified to prevent his getting an advantage of them, than all other men who have not that knowledge of his devices; but if they really had that knowledge of them, it is natural to ask from whence or by what means they obtained it, for it is certain that they could not, from any part of the Old Testament writings, know not that there is such a being as a fallen angel, as I have made appear.

By Satan, or the enemy, I think it probable the Apostle means the enemies of the Christian religion, who might take advantage by refusing to receive the penitent offender again into their fellowship, by representing them as rigorously inflexible in their conduct towards them.

Should it be objected that the Apostle useth the word Satan in the singular, and therefore that my explication of many enemies doth not accord therewith; I answer, so he does of the word Satan and Tempter, in 1 Theff. ii. 18. iii. 5. But I have shewed it to be at least very probable that he means the Jews who were his and their enemies.

Since the publication of this Tract, it hath been objected that the opinion therein maintained is injurious to practical religion, by inducing men to believe that they have no other enemy to encounter with, but what arises from themselves and the snares of the world;—I know of no better answer to it, than the Apostle James hath given, in the words already cited. That every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed, &c. See Matt. xiii. 21, 22, 23. Mark iv. 17, 18, 19. And this is unquestionably confirmed from the experience of every sinner, at this time, and in all past ages, and also from the testimony of all history, both sacred and prophane.

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## CONCLUSION.

**I**F the explanation of the passages quoted in the preceding pages, are justly founded and admitted, it will have an immediate and happy tendency to relieve the minds of those who believe, that at certain times they are conflicting with the secret and evil suggestions of Satan, and the influence they judge they have upon their heart, as what occasions much disquietude and perplexity, and interrupts their peace; and in some persons this is very considerable.

To those who may see just reason to be of the same opinion with the writer, will plainly see, that much of the subject of sermonizing is not founded in scripture, but arises from mistaking, or not clearly understanding the genuine meaning of those writers on the subject here discussed. To shew men in the clearest manner by what means, or from what real and apparent causes they are liable to, or are tempted to sin, which they themselves are capable of perceiving with certainty, from what passes within them, or their own inward feeling or experience; or that every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed; and that lust when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin, will certainly have a plain and direct tendency to warn them against it; and if thereby they are drawn into sin, by what means they may deliver themselves out of it, i. e. by over-ruling or subduing their lusts, or evil desires for the future. But to exhort men to resist a tempter, whose suggestions or devices or  
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their hearts, they are not able to distinguish from their own evil lusts or desires, must, I presume, appear to every rational man, but of little practical use ; whereas that which was just mentioned they perfectly well know, because it is grounded upon almost every day's experience in themselves and in others.

In the foregoing pages I have offered to the reader's consideration every material passage in the New Testament, where in general or particular is related the devices or temptations of the Devil, &c. with my observations and explications of them. As I am convinced, they run counter to the very general and long established opinion which men of every denomination have of Satan, &c. and of his tempting men to sin, I must beg a truce with such persons, requesting that with as little bias and prejudice as they are capable of, they will examine the several texts I have offered, and the contexts, and weigh the evidence on which they have been explained, as what appears to me to be their genuine import ; and I would hope that the sensible and discerning part of my readers will not suffer themselves to be influenced and governed in their judgment by the antiquity of their opinion, or, because it has been sanctioned by many men of distinguished learning and abilities, who, in their annotations on those passages, have given a very different sense of them than I have offered.\*

\* The veneration that men have for writings of great name and eminent piety, incline them to admit all their opinions at once, without examination ; on the other hand they reject, without hesitation, the doctrines proposed to them by those who are censured as impious and prophane ; Fearing to partake of other mens guilt, they dread conviction as a crime. FARMER.

There

There is one opinion respecting Satan, or the Devil, that in this enlightened age is very much, if not entirely relinquished, which, for many ages past was univerfally, or at leaft very generally believed to be founded upon the testimony of fcripture; and that is his bewitching men, by having poffeffion in them, or, at leaft, by his fecret influence on their mind. And were men as calmly and with a like unprejudiced mind, to attend to the texts already cited, and the explication given of them, it is probable they will fee juft reafon to alter their opinion of his tempting men to fin; as what appears to me is alike unfounded in thofe writings. At leaft, in reading thefe pages, it is poffible they may difcern clearer and ftronger proofs on the oppofite fides of the queftion, than they apprehend could be offered in favor of it.

Should the foregoing explication of the paffages which reprefent Satan as a tempter of men to fin, appear to be the true meaning of them, I prefume it will tend to remove an objection which fome perfons may make againft Revelation, or thofe parts of it. For, I fhould judge, it will be allowed, at leaft, by many perfons, that exclusive of fuch a tempter, or that men derive any moral corruption from the fin of their firft parents, they are of themfelves too much inclined or prone to tranfgrefs the law of their nature and the precepts of Revelation. For to fuppofe that they are under the power or influence of thofe two additional excitements to it, muft lay fuch a ftrong bias upon their rational powers, or the law of the mind, in their choofing or willing what is right and their duty to perform, as cannot but place them in a ftate exceedingly difadvantageous to their moral and religious improvement, efpecially thofe of them who have not the

advantage of knowing the precepts and motives contained in Revelation; and which, if admitted, may be found not reconcileable with the goodness of God, their Creator,\*

That man is liable to be tempted to sin by his own passions, or inordinate desires, when they are not properly governed, exclusive of any moral taint or corruption, he is by many supposed to derive from the sin of his first parents, is undeniable from their first transgression; who, it is certain, were not from thence in the least excited or influenced to transgress against the positive law of God given them.

If the explication I have given of the texts cited in the preceding pages, be justly founded, it is possible the following objection may be made to it, which is, How, or by what means are we to account for what Jesus, the Evangelist, and the Apostles have said of Satan or the Devil, as a being then existing, if there really be no such being? For, it will be urged, that what they have said of his acts, implies it; and also their exhortations to resist his devices and temptations.—To which I answer, if there be any force in the objection, it equally applies to what they have said of *Demons*, which, in a like manner supposes not only their existence, but also their having power to possess the bodies of men, and produce disorders in them, such as are related in the New Testament; and

\* I submit it to the deliberate judgment of the intelligent and enlightened reader, whether the belief of Satan's being the principal if not the sole cause of mens sinning, and consequently of the effects resulting from it are not too coincident with and patronizes the Manichian opinion of an evil principle to be admitted by those who profess the Christian religion, which plainly teaches them that God alone rules and governs over all his mortal creatures.

yet,

yet, notwithstanding this, I presume it is a truth not to be disproved or justly controverted, that neither the Evangelists, nor the Apostles had, or could have received any real knowledge of either of those things; and for these unanswerable reasons, viz. Because there is not any revelation made of them in the Old Testament; and it is impossible by the light of their natural reason, or understanding, they could derive any knowledge of them, any more than it respects Satan, and for the same reasons.

And there is not the least account in the New Testament that Jesus revealed those things to the Apostles or Evangelists.

To me it appears, that the only obvious method of answering the objection, or accounting for what those persons have mentioned of demons is, by admitting the disorders or infirmities of mens bodies to be natural indispositions, and not the effects of a possessing demon, or an *human departed spirit*. So likewise what they have said of Satan and his acts, may, on a like ground, be considered as the lusts or evil desires of men, excited in them from various causes, by which, as the Apostle James saith, every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed; and when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.

I readily own, that were there any clear revelation, in the Old Testament, of a fallen angel, and that he tempted men to sin, it would certainly be very natural to understand the several texts I have cited, in the common acceptation of them; but, as I have just observed, there is not in those writings any mention of either of those particulars.

If the foregoing proofs, from Scripture, and the observations founded thereon, are admitted, as entirely invalidating the common opinion concerning the

the Devil, or Satan, and his tempting men to sin, it eventually and decidedly proves that the Heathen oracles and the Priests and Priestesses being inspired by such a being, is entirely groundless, there being not the least proof of their reality ; but they wholly originated from, and were supported by the cunning and artful. Whether the learned or unlearned, or both, who were concerned therein, and who, therefore, whether from sinister or political ends, or both, imposed on the weakness and credulity of the people.

And these observations, and the conclusion just mentioned, are equally true, as it respects demons, i. e. the souls of men departed, whether of heroes or others.



#### P O S T S C R I P T.

If the foregoing proofs, from Scripture, and the reasoning deduced from them, that there is not any real evidence of there being any fallen angel, or angels ; and that they tempt men to sin, is justly founded, it will eventually and decidedly prove, that no man in any past age of the world, hath been possessed by one of them ; and, consequently, that any bodily or mental disorders, or both, that have, by Dr. Worthington and others, been ascribed to their power in, or over men, is wholly void of any evident or real proof from Scripture ; and consequently, that the testimony of the Fathers in the primitive ages, or by any other writers in more modern ones, have not any real foundation in truth, notwithstanding the very circumstantial relations they gave of them, and consequently, that the many accounts which those writers give of the manner or the means by which they have asserted that such a spirit, or spirits were expelled or cast out

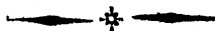
out of the bodies of men, cannot be admitted, but must be attributed to the mistaken opinion they had concerning such a being, and his power over men; and therefore, that in those relations there is not any real evidence or proof for the truth of the Christian religion; however they, were then and have since been urged to that purpose even in this age.

In asserting and maintaining what I have just mentioned, as what appears to me is built upon unquestionable evidence, I know I differ very much from men of high repute for their great learning and abilities, who have been, and still are advocates for the contrary opinion.

Whatever credit is justly due to the writings of the Fathers as it respects their account of real transactions which then took place, and of which they were competent to judge, and in recording which, their minds were not influenced by any strong religious prejudices of education, may be admitted; yet, in the cases we have mentioned, there is, in my opinion, just ground to disbelieve them, as what neither Scripture nor any real facts evince the truth of. To urge, that some of the Fathers, and other writers since, were men of great abilities and learning, as well as of integrity, which I do not deny, and therefore that they were competent to judge in such cases as we are mentioning, is not, in my opinion, a sufficient security against their being mistaken concerning them, as not visible to their notice and inspection, and in which they were liable to be misguided in their judgment by the strength of rooted prejudices, not only from education, but by the concurring sentiments of many others their cotemporaries.

FINIS.

BY THE AUTHOR,  
NEW and DECISIVE PROOFS,  
FROM  
SCRIPTURE and REASON,  
THAT  
ADULTS ONLY ARE INCLUDED  
IN THE  
DESIGN of the NEW COVENANT,  
OR THE  
GOSPEL DISPENSATION,  
AND WERE  
MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST  
IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE.  
OFFERED AS A REPLY  
TO  
Mr. WILLIAMS'S ATTEMPT,  
IN A LATE TREATISE,  
TO PROVE THAT  
BY BAPTISM INFANTS WERE INITIATED  
INTO THE  
CHURCH of CHRIST,  
AND  
MEMBERS OF IT AT THAT TIME.



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